

Hobbies

'We plan to lose,' this coin ad claims

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—A rare-coin company would sell us a coin folder and 10 Indian-head pennies "from good to fine quality" for \$24.50, plus \$2 for postage. Is that a good buy? The company says in its magazine ad, "We plan to lose money on this offer."

B.N., Chicago

A—The loss would be yours. Common-date Indian cents in "good condition" are available at local coin shops for 75 cents to

\$1 each and a basic coin folder retails for about \$2. Thus, you'd pay \$26.50 for \$10 worth of merchandise.

Q—When was the half cent eliminated? Was it the smallest U.S. coin?

R.T., Elmhurst

A—Production of half cents was discontinued in 1857, and they still rank as the lowest-denomination U.S. coin. Nevertheless, some states issued sales-tax tokens in the 1930s and 1940s that were worth one mill, or one-tenth of a cent. People saved such tokens to pay sales taxes in the wake of the Great Depression.

The P.O. just doesn't know baseball

By Dominic Sama

The U.S. Postal Service commemorated the Summer Olympics and baseball at the same time this Friday with a 29-cent stamp, but the design may provoke hot stove league arguments among baseball purists.

The stamp depicts a runner sliding into home plate with the mask-wearing catcher holding the ball in his glove and trying to apply the tag. But in a close play at home plate, whether the runner is trying to steal the base or score on a hit, the catcher in-

stinctively throws off his mask.

Baseball will be an official Olympic sport this year and will be eligible for full medal status.

First day collectors who prepare their covers should affix stamps on self-addressed envelopes and mail requests to Customer Affixed Envelopes, Olympic Baseball Stamp, Postmaster, 3900 Crown Rd., Atlanta, Ga., 30304-9991

Or, send self-addressed envelopes and a check or money order of 29 cents to Olympic Baseball Stamp, Postmaster, 3900 Crown Rd., Atlanta, Ga., 30304-9992.